

**County Of San Diego**  
**Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)**

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**SUBJECT: Code of Conduct**

**NO: HHSA-M-1.2**  
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**DATE: September 29, 2017**

**REFERENCE: County of San Diego Code of Ethics**

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**POLICY:**

All Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) employees, temporary workers, and volunteers (staff) shall uphold the highest standards of conduct in the performance of their duties by complying with following principles:

1. Adhere to the County of San Diego Code of Ethics and attest to their understanding of the contents and agreement to abide by such annually.
2. Adhere to all HHSA Program specific policies and procedures in the performance of their employment duties.
  - a) Successfully complete all program specific training requirements as mutually agreed to by program management.
3. Treat members of the public and fellow employees with integrity, and respect. In the performance of their duties, HHSA staff shall:
  - a) Provide all services in accordance with applicable federal, State and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances. Take appropriate measures to ensure practical knowledge of those laws, rules, regulations and ordinances applicable to their workplace duties.
  - b) Provide patients, clients and facility residents with the information they need to make informed decisions, including access to information about HHSA services, policies, procedures and charges.
  - c) Treat others with dignity, respect and courtesy, without regard to race, religion, creed, color, gender, economic status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnic group identification, disability, political affiliation, marital status, domestic partnership, source of payment, or any other non-treatment or non-service related characteristic.
  - d) Actively promote quality assurance and quality improvement and raise concerns regarding possible deficiencies or errors in the quality of care, treatment or services provided to the appropriate level of management for assessment and resolution.
  - e) Perform services in a manner that maintains the safety of patients, clients, facility residents, the community, co-workers and other employees, and the environment.

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- f) In the performance of employment duties, conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to their standing as representatives of HHSA and support the best interests of the public.
4. Have practical knowledge of and perform employment duties in compliance with all Federal, state, and local laws, as well as County policies and procedures applicable to their job. HHSA staff shall:
- a) Comply with workplace safety policies.
  - b) Secure and protect information according to the laws and regulations governing the confidentiality and security of information.
  - c) Dispose of all medical waste or other hazardous materials properly.
  - d) If holding a supervisory position, ensure their staff have sufficient information and training to comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies that are relevant to the staff's responsibilities.
5. Conduct HHSA duties in accordance with the highest standards of ethical and legal conduct. HHSA staff shall:
- a) Conform to the ethics and standards for their profession and licensure and exercise sound judgment in the performance of their duties.
  - b) Avoid commitments that interfere with, or could be perceived to conflict or interfere with, their ability to properly perform their HHSA duties.
  - c) Report all outside employment as required on the County of San Diego Disclosure Statement.
  - d) Disclose to their supervisor relationships that may impact their duties, such as a relative, friend or tenant who is an applicant or recipient of HHSA services.
  - e) Disclose to their supervisor or management a personal relationship with another staff in their chain of supervision.
  - f) Refrain from entering into personal relationships with clients, patients, or facility residents met as a result of their HHSA duties which may compromise the staff's judgment or objectivity.
6. Ensure that HHSA funds and property are used with care, guided by prudent judgement and good business practices. HHSA staff shall:
- a) Be accountable for the proper expenditure of HHSA funds.

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- b) Use HHSA assets and property appropriately and not use HHSA time, computers, facilities, equipment, badge, or uniforms for private gain or advantage, or the private gain or advantage of another.
  - c) Be responsible for HHSA assets and property in their possession and use caution to ensure that such assets or property are not broken, lost, or stolen. Store assets and property, including data, in a secure manner and immediately report if lost or stolen.
  - d) Maintain accurate and thorough records and ensure that information provided to internal or external entities is accurate, thorough, and timely.
  - e) Ensure no false, fraudulent, inaccurate or fictitious claims are submitted by only billing services rendered and fully documented. Immediately report and promptly correct all identified errors.
  - f) Obtain appropriate authorization prior to committing or spending County funds.
  - g) Dispose of surplus, obsolete, and salvaged property appropriately.
7. Create a work environment that promotes open and honest communications and encourages raising ethical concerns without fear of retribution or retaliation. HHSA staff shall:
- a) Ensure no disciplinary action or retaliation be taken against any staff for reporting in good faith a perceived issue, problem, concern or violation.
  - b) Ensure no staff is required to compromise appropriate professional standards.
  - c) Otherwise promote a positive image and environment.

**PROCEDURE:**

- 1. Provision of Code of Conduct:
  - a) New employees will receive a copy of this Code of Conduct during their orientation to the County and will provide a signed Code of Conduct Acknowledgement to their supervisor and no later than thirty (30) days after beginning employment with HHSA.
  - b) Staff will receive a copy of the Code of Conduct annually and must return a signed Code of Conduct Acknowledgement to their supervisor annually.
  - c) Supervisors will forward Acknowledgements to HHSA Human Resources within five (5) work days of receipt.

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2. Report suspected violations of the Code of Conduct, including those of Federal, state and local laws, to a supervisor, manager, the HHSA Compliance Office, the County Office of Ethics and Compliance or the County's Ethics Hotline.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

HHSA is committed to providing consistently high quality, skilled, compassionate, and reliable care and customer service to its patients, clients, facility residents, constituents and the larger community, regardless of race, creed, color, economic status or any other personal characteristic, and to maintaining a culture that promotes the prevention, detection and resolution of instances of conduct that do not conform to laws, rules, regulations, or County policies or procedures.

The standards required by this Code of Conduct can only be achieved through the efforts of dedicated employees who conduct themselves with honesty, integrity and professionalism and in adherence to the letter and the spirit of all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Although each individual is ultimately responsible for his or her own conduct, HHSA is committed to assisting its employees in these efforts by maintaining a work environment that promotes these standards and encourages its employees to demonstrate the highest ethical standards in performing their daily tasks.

**QUESTIONS/INFORMATION:**

Contact the Agency Compliance Office at (619) 338-2807, or by e-mail at [Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Nick Macchione, Agency Director  
Health and Human Services Agency